

# THE AMBIENCE OF AFRICAN POLITICAL LEADERS AS AGENTS OF CORRUPTION: A CURSORY STUDY OF UMEH'S AMBASSADORS OF POVERTY

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## ABSTRACT

*Poetry remains one of the key genres in literary literature, whose message always reflects human life. It is also seen as a divine art that exposes societal ills. It is out of this, that the present study seeks to espouse. The study, thus far tries to reveal a very cankerous object called corruption, which has bedeviled the hearts of the political leaders in Africa, using Umeh's 'Ambassadors of Corruption' as a source of contact. It therefore, employs Marxist's framework as a theoretical catalyst for its analysis.*

**KEYWORDS:** Agents, Ambience, Political Elites, Corruption & Ambassadors of Poverty

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## INTRODUCTION

Literature is seen obviously as a mimetic art, and that its object of mimesis is the social world and the people living in it. It is the social world, which has the people who always engage themselves in the affairs of "prattontas . . . kai drontas", thus acting and doing of an action (Burns 1990: 18). This therefore, seems to suggest that literature is about what we do, what we think and how to get things done in life. It is also meant "to 'make us see', 'make us perceive', 'make us feel' something which alludes to reality" (Althusser 1974: 204). The scope of literature represents an expression of imaginative truth and realities of life. It is the mirror that reflects the total sense of the physical world (Osofisan 2006).

Coming from this classical and theoretical argument, one is attempted to believe that the primary concern of literary work is the imitation of human experience in society. It is out of this important aspect that has always been the actual sense of codification for every writer, since it is the duty of a literary artist to be "a spokesman to his community and to act as the conscience of his society", so as to help expose human guerrilla and the perilous problems that confront the people (Saikia 2015: 89). Soyinka (1968) also maintains that a writer should stop just "being a mere chronicler", but should understand "also that part of his essential purpose is to write with a very definite vision" that would at least reveal "the truthful exposition of the present" (pp. 58). In the light of this, Umeh has been able to arouse a fierce dissension and extensively employ this man-made phenomenon in his literary piece to achieve certain artistic form, and also to use it as a measure to reveal the canker that has become a natural avocado of our daily life perspicacity as humans.

## THE STATE OF AFRICA AND THE GENETIC SOURCE OF CORRUPTION

Africa society is highly noted for its strict adherence to cultural values. This is because, Africa is strongly founded on discipline through communal commitments, supernatural beliefs and conventions which instilled fear in its people. Traditional authorities and a few opinion leaders sought to the implementation and strict adherence to these core values. These leaders “were responsible and responsive to the subjects . . . as much as possible” (Igbolin 2015: 142). They were never “said to be corrupt, because of the communal spirits that guided their” operations (ibid.). These unique indigenous cultural values were destroyed by the coming of colonial authority in Africa. Upon arrival in the coast of Africa, the colonial authority used “material inducement to compel” African traditional authorities “and administrators to collaborate with them in the pursuit of their colonial project of dominating and exploiting their own people” (Mulinge & Lesetedi 1998: 87). This practice, therefore provided a fertile ground and genetic source for corrupt activity in Africa.

After independence, there was a general expectation for Africa state to transpose and restore its lost integrity to corruption, but this turned out to be a wishful thinking and prophetic mirage. This happened because, the leaders who took over from the reigns of colonial authority had become addicted to the abyss of the corrupt morass, and hence they could not resist the temptation to discontinue this act. As a result, they only assumed the reigns of leadership and decided not ‘to harness the vast human and natural resources available in the continent for the benefit of the Africa people’, but for their personal good and comfort (Ebegbulem 2012: 226). The end result of such an unfair behavior by these political leaders, who seek to give themselves personal benefits at the expense of the large majority kept growing, and later became the order of the day.

Several years down the lane, the rate of corruption in Africa has become very inimical to our political leaders. It has become a social canker and a phenomenon that has come to stay in Africa soil forever, since the leaders who have been elected to serve are criminally and continuously mismanaging the scare resources that have been entrusted into their care. As a result, the act of corrupt deeds has seeped into the pores and the veins of these leaders in Africa, thereby destroying them beyond human repairs. Dukor (1990) underscores the fact that corruption in Africa has grown violently to become “endemic, cancerous and oracular tendencies”. It has become “endemic because, it normally catches up with people or community”. It is seen as cancerous character “because it spreads from one person to the other, until it engulfs the whole society”. It has also become “oracular in nature because, once it spreads in a system, people tend to believe in it just as people of ancient times believed in and worshipped oracles” (pp. 21).

Our political leaders have become sole members of corrupt foibles in one way or another, because they own power. Most of the actions that these leaders undertake, negatively affect the lives of their people. This is generally so, because they often want to live out of opportunistic tendencies with the sole aim of acquiring wealth for themselves, and this has ingrained into the steep cause of Africa’s developmental failure. As such, the people in the continent are continuously growing poorer and poorer since our political leaders have also decided to cheat on them.

### Leadership Style in Africa’s Political Space

Being a leader is an important asset in any organization. Such leader becomes an anchor that controls and steers the affairs of his or her followers. As a result, a leader in any institution is often viewed as an individual who has been appointed to effectively manage and “coordinate the activities of the followers or a team towards pre-agreed or pre-defined goal or objectives within the limits of available resources” (Ebegbulem 2012: 222). The individual leader is often

mandated to have the plights of the followers at heart, irrespective of a particular leadership style (whether democratic, autocratic or laissez faire) he or she chooses to operate with. It is such mandated duty that will promote and further propel the followers into the scheme of prosperity. In doing so, a leader has to be fair, transparent and accountable to the people. These are the things that are lacking in Africa's political leadership space. Africa's political leaders do not care about the welfare of their members, because their basic preoccupations as political leaders are to loot and amass wealth, to abuse the power given to them, make their faces appear "on currency notes", their photographs grace "offices and shops", and to name "highways, football stadiums and hospitals after themselves" (Meredith 2006: 378).

Over the years, Africa has had a political leadership crisis, since the leaders that we have obviously decided to remain distant to the needs of the people that they claimed they are serving. Ebegbulem (2012) argues that one of the critical problems militating against Africa's development is the "insincerity and insensitivity of her leaders to the needs of the ordinary, whom they have been elected to serve" (pp. 221). Such an inept nature of Africa's leadership has never helped the continent to develop up to certain standard that everybody had wanted. As a result, many people in the continent of Africa do not trust the sort of political leaders that they have in their respective countries. This is because, they make promises during electioneering campaigns and such promises are not fulfilled even when they win power. In this respect, they only assume the reigns of leadership for their personal good. They therefore, allow political power to eat into their heads and subsequently make them dictators to the people who brought them to power. They often grow in power to employ "secret police to hunt down opponents", license them to detention, "torture and murder" them at will, because they see such people as threats to the kind of administrative style they have adopted to rule the people with (Meredith 2006: 378). And this has led to the killing of very intelligent and innocent souls, who could contribute immensely to the development of their respective countries and Africa in general.

### **Corrupt Explosions by Political Leaders in Africa**

Development in many Africa countries has unnecessarily been constrained by corrupt predators. These predators are obviously the political leaders, who have been given the people's mandate to steer the affairs of the country's resources. The political leaders in Africa are perceived as general administrators; but ironically, they are not ready to build independent parastatal sector for their people to live in (Meredith 2006). Studies by Hope (2000), Ribadu (2009) and Uneke (2010) have shown that between 1960 and 2000, many African countries suffered the heat of corruption scandals due to the sort of political leadership that some of the countries such as Nigeria, DR. Congo, Cameroon, Cabon including others experienced over that period. These leaders only manage to engross themselves in the state of public loots for their own survival. One of such leaders, who are alleged to have looted his country's financial resources was Mobutu Sese Seko. Sese Seko was the President of the present-day DR Congo. He ruled for thirty-two years, when he ousted Patrice Lumumba through coup d'état. In his tenure as a political leader, Sese Seko mismanaged the resources that he superintended over to the surprise of many. He allegedly managed to embezzle a whopping sum of US\$4 billion to US\$5 billion to a private bank account in Switzerland, without clearly having the needs of his people at heart. It is as if his "government existed, so that corruption might thrive" (Gboyega 1996:5). He only thought of his personal welfare and the family alone, and this therefore influenced his appetite to engage in the act.

His compatriot in Nigeria, Sani Abacha, also did same for his country. He became the President of Nigerian after several attempted coups. He only ruled the country for just five years, but the period was characterized by "dictatorship and frenetic looting" of state resources (Tell 2006 quoted in Fagbadebo 2007: 31). He was also alleged to have stolen US\$1.13

billion and £413 million, which is different from kickbacks he received from foreign companies doing business at that time in Nigeria (Fagbadebo 2007). Abacha regarded the office he occupied at that time as a maximizing force for economic survival and to accrue incomes and other benefits at the expense of entire public body, since he did not care about the needs of the citizens that he was serving. Such neglect for the economic needs of the people is an unpardonable excuse that anybody could admit. Rather, it is seen entirely as a serious blow. The impact of this exploitative myriad affected the needy and the less privileged ones, who were disproportionately deprived from certain basic economic development and social services in the country at that period (Wei & Wu 2001).

Similarly, El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba was alleged to have committed the same rot “at the expense of the people” (Ebegbulem 2012: 221). Omar Bongo became the president for the Republic of Gabon following the death of Leon M’ba in 1967. He remained in office for forty-two years until his demise in 2009. Due to his long stay in power, he had the “golden opportunity to sell off government assets to political cronies”, family members and a few selected “businessmen at minimum prices on highly favorable terms, including low-interest and lengthy pay-off periods” (Meredith 2006: 374). As a result, “his business interests ranged from property to manganese and oil exports. In return from substantial tax breaks, he arranged for French oil company Elf, which managed Gabon’s oil resources, to transfer 10 per cent of all petroleum sales into a *Provision pour Investissements Diversifiés*, a thinly disguised slush fund for his own use” (ibid: 381). He never thought of how to develop the human resource capacity of his people. He only priced his personal progress along the mindset of public exploitation. Certainly, such an illegitimate use of public funds meant to address the plethora of social problems of the people, which is diverted to benefit a private interest constituting an act of injustice and unfairness on the part of former President Omar Bongo.

Another political leader, who has been labeled with corrupt act, is the former President Félix Houphouët-Boigny. He was the first black president for the people of the present-day Côte D’Ivoire, a position he held for thirty-three years before his sudden death in 1993 (Meredith 2006). During his reigns as a president, “he kept at least one-tenth of the country’s cocoa export revenues in his personal bank account for distribution to his cronies and supporters. He also ensured that members of his family and clan benefited from tax and tariff exemptions, high-level state jobs, and subsidized credit for their businesses” (Meredith 2006:288). He also “built for himself a basilica modelled on St. Peter’s in Rome, at a cost of \$145 million” (ibid.: 289). Houphouët-Boigny did not recognize that he was there to oversee the affairs of the people of his country and not for his families and friends kind of business. He was seen as someone, who was constantly exploiting and manipulating the people politically and economically to advance his own course of prosperity. Under his regime, people of Côte D’Ivoire saw corruption as “the sole guiding principle for running affairs of state” (Ribadu 2006 as cited in Fagbadebo 2007:31). As a result, “the period witnessed a total reversal and destruction of every good thing in the country” (ibid.). And this, invariably, “led to weak legitimacy, as the citizens lacked faith” in his leadership qualities “and by extension, the political system” (Fagbadebo 2007: 28).

In effect, the actions and inactions of these political leaders identified in the above discussion have rendered their respective countries to economic ransom, thereby making their countries vulnerable to the prey of foreign aids. It is because of the fact that “several billions of dollars in capital have been siphoned out of Africa” and within to be saved for their own personal interests (Oshewolo & Durowaiye 2013: 6). Oshewolo & Durowaiye (2013: 6), further lament that “these funds that should have been invested in pro-poor development programmes have been stashed away in various personal and foreign bank accounts, with economic growth and development nose-diving” in their respective countries. It

has been estimated that the act of some of these leaders in Africa have caused the continent to lose \$1.4 trillion leading to excessive borrowing to meet other social commitments annually (Meredith 2006). In this unfortunate situation, Africa has dominated so often in the list of corrupt countries for the past decades, even though the canker is also pervasive in Asia, Latin America and some other continents (Farrales 2005). It is because; no concrete measures have been put in place to curb this menace in Africa, hence it is continuously soaring in the continent.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study is based on the Marxist theory of criticism. The idea of Marxism originated from two scholars with different ideological orientations. These individuals were Karl Marx, a philosopher, and Friedrich Engels, a sociologist (Bressler 1999). This theory is obviously seen a socio-philosophic “ weapon of change preaching a state of equilibrium, exposing the falsities of bourgeoisie culture and by so doing, becoming a propagandist literature for the destined society in which all men will be happy and free” (Ikechi 2005: 67). The base of the Marxism theory is founded on the belief that every human society should remain classless and that economic status and situations should not serve as a bait to categorize people into different classes in society. In this case, the society should provide equal platforms and opportunities for all devoid of an oppressor and an ‘oppressed’.

Literarily, a text is seen as a social institution which reflects the product of human society. As such, Marxists view a text as a social subservient through which a polemic expression of imaginative truth could be brought to fore can’t be underestimated in this regard. In this study, Umeh is seen to have achieved in his work a porous society, where resources are control by a few upper class citizens (political leaders). These upper class citizens, in their attempt to manage the affairs of the resources, loot the country’s wealth to “their heart’s content with impunity” (Meredith 2006: 383). Such a denial of common public good for all and sundry brings about economic disparities and social injustice to the people’s livelihood. And, this unfair treatment by our political leaders in their communities has become a critical principle that champions the realization of the present work, hence the theory.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted content analysis approach. The employment of this research device was appropriate, since it helped to interpret the text (poem) analytically and to unearth the contributing effect of corruption, which is gradually becoming a surviving mechanism for the political leaders in Africa.

### **Source of Data**

The primary source of data is Umeh’s poem, *Ambassadors of Poverty*. Researchers’ preference for the poem was fairly appropriate as he intends to gain holistic comprehension on how this social maggot (corruption) has been explored in Umeh’s poetic piece, and how it has developed to become a unit of macrocosm in Africa continent.

### **Synoptic Summary of the Poem**

*Ambassadors of Poverty* is written by a renowned Nigerian writer, Philip Obioma Chinedu Umeh. This poem is just a part of his poetry collection labelled *Rhythm of Conscience: Ambassadors of Poverty and Corruption*. The poem (*Ambassadors of Poverty*) presents a thrilling piece of narrative work with some snippets of satiric feats. The persona recounts a very common human phenomenon in Africa society, where the wealth of a nation is left in the hands of political

leaders. The leaders are people with ‘kleptomaniac fingers’, who always steal the resources meant for the collective good of all and deposit them in foreign accounts for their own benefits. As a result, the ordinary people are left in the state of a very serious economic jeopardy with no access to good roads, potable water, school, health care and other basic amenities.

The persona sees this behavior coming from the political leaders as a scam for a political albatross. The poem under review seeks to satirize the ills and the poor leadership qualities that have been a generational drought for Africa over centuries by featuring an important element of corruption and social injustice, which is gradually piercing its ravaging root in our contemporary society, as a major threat for development. In the light of all these, Umeh builds his accusation on our malarkey political elites and leaders who have become a maladroitness emblem of the economic rot and acrobatic sickening venom of Africa’s progress over the centuries (Akinyade 2014).

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF CORRUPT MANIFESTATIONS

Quite significantly, the political leaders in Africa have been heavily chastised for not being too generous towards the needs of their citizens. They have rather become the selfish individuals who accrue and scramble for the wealth of Africa for themselves, families and friends. In this respect, Umeh has brought these leaders who are “lords” of our land for public-mockery. The persona sees the course of African’s problems as a reflective symbol solely championed by the unflagging attitudes of our leaders who always want to feel ‘big’ and to be recognized as ‘messiahs’. As a result, our political leaders only loot *to boost the economy of the colonial masters in order . . . to impoverish brothers and sisters at home*. This behavior of African leaders looting the scarce resources for their own benefits does not help the Africa’s economy to grow; it rather boosts foreign economy at the expense of their frustrated citizens. These leaders are not obvious helpers to the citizens. They are the real enemies of progress to the people since they do not have the developmental agenda of their people at heart. This act of corruption only allows a few scandalously rich political leaders to monopolize the possessions of the state and deprive the marginalized sections of the population into the state of undercut penury.

Nothing is too interesting to an African, when he or she unseats the price of power to control the affairs of the state. It does not matter how he or she gets power. What such as individual thinks about is to grip the citizens into the abyss of economic pestilence, so that he or she takes advantage of the situation to enrich himself or herself in the case of high-level theft and political gains (Meredith 2006), as the rest of the citizens are found on the streets without

. . . *money nor food*  
 . . . *lie in surrender*  
*under the weight of poverty*  
 . . . *glued to . . . hungry and desperate*

As a result of this behavior, lives are lost every day through hunger and poor sanitary conditions. It is estimated that more than two-thirds of Africans live in the conditions of extreme poverty. This is so because, the political leaders in Africa who are expected to live up to expectations have already “failed to deliver effective programmes to alleviate the plight” of their people ((Meredith 2006: 292) since they have accorded “ample space in order . . . to generate unprecedented prosperity for themselves” (Oshewolo & Durowaiye 2013: 6). As a result, the underprivileged masses feel so much cheated, and therefore, mow down the political leaders who have *kleptomaniac fingers* with a *white man’s machine* through various levels of coup d’état as a way of showing disapproval to the economic hardship that they are going through.

Consequently, Africa's political development always keeps the have-nots away from the culture of infrastructural freedom and economic independent. All the hardships that the have-nots go through are the result of the selfish nature of the political leaders in Africa, who seek to satisfy their personal whims. With this, the have-nots are obviously dropped into the world without any touch to economic defense (Forster 1927). In a growing desperation, the have-nots are found to be living in

*their impoverished constituencies  
prostrate with death traps for roads  
mud . . . water, candle for light  
underneath trees for schools  
rats for protein  
fasting as food*

The people are there in their constituencies lacking the basic social amenities such as roads, potable, electricity and school. In fact, a world which is full of rigid corruption impasse droops away the beautiful springs of people's joy. The absence of these social amenities on ordinary life has become calamitous euphoria on the threading life of the people (Meredith 2006). Obviously, African leaders have remained an exemplary anchor of nomadic individuals, who do not give value to people's plight but rather trick on the masses, so that they can secure fortunes in the schizophrenic world, where they live and control the affairs of their people to secure their own benefits. And, this has become so pervasive a phenomenon for the people in Africa, as they continue to wallow in poverty and face economic and social marginalization.

In the dint of all these, African leaders scramble for political supremacy to control the resources and further frustrate the corporate will of their people. As a result, they are seen as pseudo-nationals who allow their citizens to go through serious economic hiccups. Individual masses are then locked up obviously in the street of jeopardy. The leaders would then

*. . . trip the economy down  
. . . for the control of power  
and their people's wealth  
. . . while their people lie in . . .  
. . . assuage . . . hunger*

So that, they can live better life with their family and other acquaintances. Leaders of Africa see corruption as an everyday session and natural aura. They execute it senselessly, because they own power and not call to serve the vulnerable teeming masses in the society. In such an act, the citizens are left in the stack of social exclusion to the very thing that they have to benefit. Most of the resources in the land of Africa are harnessed by corrupt leaders of the continent for the fact that they want to be marked for cheap popularity.

In the context of this poem, there is a fair crony of decays, which is acrobatically accessible to the political elites and leaders of Africa. Under their clique powers, our leaders in Africa always strive to achieve circuitous benefits in life as against what they are supposed to do for their people's economic survival. They obviously assume office without having a pragmatic policy direction for the people. They are then seen as

*barons of incompetence  
with kleptomaniac fingers  
locked in corrosive war of corruption  
with their peoples' treasury  
counterpoised by deprivations*

As a result of their incompetence, they have become patriotic in a very reverse order, thereby putting the expectation of their citizens into nothingness and a state of serious economic limbo. These leaders only travel every now and then under the pretence of international conferences. They seem to be much more concern with issues outside their respective jurisdiction, rather than matters of their own people. Due to this, the political leaders hide under the safe environment of international conferences to siphon public purse for their own welfares to the detriment of the basic needs of citizens.

Afful-Boachie (2006) asserts that “a good appreciation of literary work is not possible without a sound knowledge of the numerous literary devices” in place (pp. 47). These devices are tools which are used by any literary writer in order to execute and present his or her message to the audience. This development is found to be in a solemn relation with any literary piece. In the light of this, Umeh makes effective use of some of these devices to enrich his artistic prowess. One of the critical devices that Umeh used to carry out his message is alliteration. According to Agyekum (2013), alliteration refers to “a series of words that begin with the same letter of sound, especially consonant”, and such sounds are repeated at a frequent interval (pp.226). As a result, Umeh explores the following lines with words in an alliterative form.

*frustrating . . . of their followers  
People, price out . . . powers  
fasting as food  
man's machine  
without . . . without vision, without mission  
. . . fit for the farm*

These alliterative sounds [*f, m, p, z, w*] employed in the above lines carry a very negative slur on the part of the citizens, who are rendered helpless and hopeless by the political leaders and ambassadors in their own country of habitant. This inharmonious style of literary ingredients also signifies unfairness and untold hardship that political leaders have unleashed on the ordinary citizens. These unfairness and untold hardship has become an intestinal economic wrecker on the lives of the people in Africa, because they feel frustrated by the scam of their corrupt leaders of the economy.

Umeh also uses metaphor as one of the essential elements in order to sell out his ideas. With metaphor, it basically deals with comparisons of ideas without the use of ‘as’ or ‘like’. Aristotle in his literary text, *The Rhetoric*, maintains that metaphor makes learning pleasant and creates knowledge of beauty in its natural sense into a literary work. Accordingly, Richards (1936) describes metaphor as having two-part ingredients. These parts are the ‘tenor’ and the ‘vehicle’. The ‘tenor’ is the subject to which attributes are ascribed to. The ‘vehicle’ is the object whose attributes are borrowed. With this forms in place, Umeh’s sheer exuberance to make use of metaphor as an eminent feat in this masterpiece shows a pale shadow for Africa’s leadership style. The poem marks the freshness of metaphorical clarion in the lines below;



*. . . Ambassadors of poverty  
. . . patriot in reverse order  
. . . with death traps for roads  
. . . kleptomaniac fingers  
. . . the "saviours" of the people  
. . . constituting willing tools in the hands*

Umeh's metaphorical presentation in this regard seeks to explain the nature and the kind of leaders that we have in Africa. These leaders have unduly derailed the good fortunes of their own 'brothers and sisters' thereby making life for the under-privileged ones unbearable and evenly unproductive. This is because, leadership style in Africa is arbitrarily poor and often marred by corrupt activities with impunity.

Repetition has been the core element in the poetic genre. Intuitively, this poem is highly rocked with the repetition of particular structure and it is used in a pictorial manner to suggest perennial nature of the disease called corruption. The repetition of *Ambassadors of poverty*, quite unceasingly, throughout the poem is meant to create the scale of consistency in the behavior of the leaders. It shows the unwilling nature of political leaders and their failure to rescue their people from the wrath of poverty. They always claim to be economic "saviours of the people" but they are eventually ". . . locked in corrosive war of corruption". As such, the continent is found to be trading in a failing economy, where the citizens are in the state of a total penury because of leadership problem and mismanagement of the resources.

The poem under review has also become successful in revealing the rot in Africa society through the use of enjambment. Enjambment is a poetic device whereby the line in a verse continues into the next line without stopping in order to create iconicity in meaning (Afful-Boachie 2006). It is the only device that runs through every single poem either written or spoken. This literary item plays quintessential role in reinforcing the central theme of any literary piece. Enjambment has been a very common technique in modern poetry, as it is used to canvas the creation of conversational tone. Umeh, just like any other poetic writer, also uses this device (enjambment) to depict the exploration of mercuric canker being perpetrated by leaders in Africa. He further advances on the use of enjambment to indicate the fact that the act (corruption), so deadly as it is, has become a continuous idol of worship and reverence belief which is so much entrenched in African tradition and culture over the decades.

Umeh caps his poetic discourse with clear-cut and comprehensive stylistic thoughts. The persona espouses a definite fluid and a magnitude feeling through a co-existed selection of words and other phraseological patterns. The poem is patterned in rich and simple language with everyday expressions like

*. . . ambassadors of poverty,  
. . . barons of incompetence,  
. . . corrupt masters of the economy,  
. . . (steal) our collective joy*

These expressions are highly engulfed with noun phrases. These phrases actually give credence to the fact that our leaders and political elites in Africa seek economic expediency with their usual royal game to satisfy their ultimate joy in life.

The preponderance use of present forms of certain verbs provides a very striking phenomenon in this discussion. In this work, Umeh uses the present form of verbs like *are* and *do* more sparingly for a thawing effect. The poet has tempted to present these grammatical items in his subject to give an emphatic spike that, the act of corruption is a continuous action and ceaseless in its essence, since it has become part of pork-barrel body politics of the present generation of the Africa's political leaders. As a result, our political leaders live with it, and die in it because it is a perpetual exercise in the continent. It then suggests that corruption is a generational canker and, it therefore does affect anyone after having secured power from the people.

## CONCLUSIONS

The scope of the present research has been able to demonstrate sufficiently and quite expeditiously among other things on the graphical relationship between literary work, which is the bay of conscious art, and social menace (corruption) which is cramping the scale of human life and development in Africa. In effect, Umeh's poem has become a cyclic epoch to lift the veil of this societal ill, which is hidden the beauty of Africa (Eliot 1909; Ogundokun 2013). The analysis made so far tries to reveal a very cankerous object called corruption, which has bedeviled the hearts of the leaders in Africa and how serious it is, if certain measures are not taken to avert this social problem among our political leaders.

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